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## EDITOR'S PAGE

Only a few natural resources in the world are distributed more or less uniformly. One of them is oil shale. Among more than 100 countries with known oil shale deposits are the USA, China, Russia, England, France, Germany, Australia, Brazil, Estonia, and many others.

Oil shale was first used in Europe during the Middle Ages as a solid fuel for heating and cooking. First experiments in oil shale thermal destruction were made by G. Helmersen in 1838. Over 200 small plants were producing lamp oil and other oil products from oil shale in the USA at the time of American Revolution. However, as a result of the discovery of the crude oil in the USA in 1859, oil shale lost its importance.

At the same time, the shale-oil resources of the USA alone are about seven times as great as the known petroleum reserves of the entire world. Most of the experts agree that oil shale will eventually play a certain role in satisfying the world's expanding energy needs. However, contradictory tendencies can be observed today. While Swedish scientists don't see any prospects for oil shale at all, wide-scale research aimed at investigation and commercial use of oil shale is going on in Israel, China and Australia.

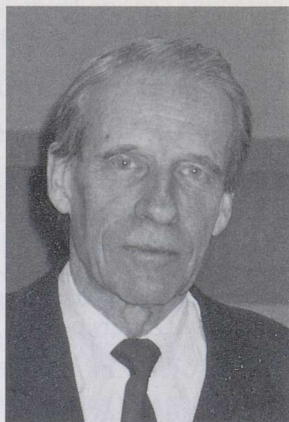
Systematic research of oil shale and its products began in Estonia in 1925, initiated by Prof. Paul Kogerman. Already in 1925 about 300,000 tons of shale were mined and 3,000 tons of crude oil produced. Nowadays the share of oil shale as the resource of primary energy used in Estonia is about 62 %.

As a logical conclusion of the successful research of oil shale in Estonia, in 1984 the journal *Oil Shale* was founded. It is the only journal in the world dedicated to this particular subject. I appreciate very highly the efforts of the Editor-in-Chief *emeritus* Acad. Ilmar Öpik and of the acting Editor-in-Chief Prof. Jüri Kann, who with the help of the Executive Editor Dr. Aili Kogerman have succeeded in making *Oil Shale* an internationally recognized forum for scientists working on the oil shale problems. Besides publishing the journal *Oil Shale*, the Editorial Office has become a world-wide consulting centre in the field of oil shale.

During the first 15 years *Oil Shale* has been published by the Institute of Chemistry. Beginning with 1999 the journal will be administered by the Estonian Academy Publishers. The latter publishes the *Proceedings of the Estonian Academy of Sciences* in five series, a journal of humanities and social sciences *Trames*, and the journal *Linguistica Uralica*.

I am sure that in a small republic like Estonia concentration of scientific periodicals under the same publisher is reasonable and gives the opportunity to fulfil our mission in disseminating scientific information still more effectively and on a higher level.

I heartily welcome my colleagues from *Oil Shale* and wish them all success under the new roof.



Hillar ABEN

Editor-in-Chief

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